

CHAPTER IV

PATTERNS OF LAND OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION

When the Sawah Sempadan scheme was started every family that settled in the area was given a three acre Sawah lot and a one acre kampong lot. The land was not to be subdivided or sold without official permission, but it is an open secret that this practice had been carried on.

It has been found difficult to separate the patterns of land ownership and operation under little neat headings because land ownership and operation in the real world is complex. A person may operate half of his holdings and rent out another half or he may operate somebody else's land but rent out his own land.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS AND BY SIZE OF PIECES

As mentioned earlier a piece of land is a padi land when it is planted with padi during the main season of March to September. A piece of land will not be considered padi land if padi is not planted during the main padi growing season, March to September, even though the land may be situated in the sawah lots.

The non-padi land in the 1 and under 2 acre group which total 7 pieces under the operated not owned group can be assumed as non-sawah lots. This is because of the fact that the land in the sawah lot which are not planted with padi have very poor soil and a person is not likely to plant sweet potatoes or yam which are considered as poverty crops on a rented land. A crop is considered a poverty crop when it is consumed only by the person when he has a lower standard of living. Normally, the person would not consume that crop as a staple food but may be forced to consume it when his standard of living falls. Therefore it is most probable that this land consists of kampong lots which are permanently under coconuts and fruit trees. In the case where the land is owned, then the land may be a sawah lot or a kampong lot.

TABLE 17-1**NUMBER OF PIERES BY SIZE AND OPERATION**

| Size of Pieres in Acres | Operated and Owned | | Operated not Owned | | Owned but not Operated | | TOTAL |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-----------------------|----|---------------------------|----|-------|
| | M | J | M | J | M | J | |
| Under 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1 & under 2 | 19 | 48 | 12 | 20 | 8 | 6 | 113 |
| 2 & under 3 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 15 |
| 3 & under 4 | 90 | 71 | 25 | 15 | 1 | 5 | 167 |
| 4 & under 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 6 |
| 5 & over | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| TOTAL | 71 | 130 | 40 | 36 | 10 | 15 | 303 |

In the 3 and under 4 group where the land is operated and owned it is most probable that the land is in the sawah lot. A piece of land is operated but not under padi because of the fact that the soil is too poor for padi. It can be due to the fact that the land is too dry. This type of land is usually situated near the main canal on top of the Blocks D, E and F. It is a paradox that the land nearest to the main canal are dry, but this is due to the fact that the Blocks nearest the main canal are high when compared to the Blocks away from the main canal, for example, Block H. Since water find its own level the water will flow to the low lying Blocks although these Blocks are situated away from the main canal. As a result the land near the main canal is dry while those away from the main canal have adequate water.

Most of the land belonging to the settlers in this group are under padi as out of a total of 302 pieces 230 are under padi. Again most of the land under padi are land which are operated. There are 162 pieces of these while those operated but not owned number 88 pieces.

There are two types of land which are owned but not operated. One is the case of the land which is not operated because of the poverty of the soil and another type is land which is rented out. Out of 25 pieces of land in this category 6 pieces are in the 3 and under 4 category while 5 are in the 2 and under 3 group.

In all the categories of the land ownership the number of pieces belonging to the Javanese exceeds that of pieces belonging to the Malays except in the case of the non padi land where the land is operated but not owned. In this case the number of pieces belonging to the Malays exceeds those belonging to the Javanese.

NUMBER OF PIECES BY SIZE AND OPERATION

In Block B, where the land is operated and owned 12 pieces under the 1 and under 2 category belong to the Malays while 28 pieces belong to the Javanese. This trend of the number of pieces belonging to the Javanese is greater than the pieces belonging to the Malays is carried to the 3 and under 4 group and the 4 and under 5 acres category. This is not unexpected because of the fact that the Javanese outnumber the Malays in all the Blocks.

Under the situation where the land is operated but not owned, the Malays in Block F rent a greater number of pieces than the Javanese. This is clearly indicated by the total figure where

the Malays rent 24 pieces while the Javanese only rent 15 pieces. The Malays also have a greater number of land which is owned but not operated- 4 pieces as compared to only 2 Javanese ones.

From the above, the impression obtained should be that the Malays are relatively poorer than the Javanese in Block B. The Malays rent a greater number of pieces than the Javanese although the population is smaller than the Javanese population.

TABLE 17-2 BLOCK B NO. OF PIECES BY SIZE & OPERATION

| Size of Pieces in Acres | Operated and Owned | | Operated not Owned | | Owned but not Operated | | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|---------------------------|---|-------|
| | M | J | M | J | M | J | |
| Under 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1 & under 2 | 12 | 28 | 8 | 5 | 4 | - | 57 |
| 2 & under 3 | - | - | 2 | 1 | - | 2 | 5 |
| 3 & under 4 | 31 | 40 | 13 | 9 | - | - | 93 |
| 4 & under 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 5 |
| 5 & over | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | 44 | 71 | 24 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 160 |

In Block E a greater number of the pieces are owned by the Javanese than the Malays as reflected in Block D. But in the case of land operated but not owned, more Javanese are under this category than Malays and so too is land which is owned but not operated.

As in Block D most of the land are operated by the owner. As seen from the figures 36 pieces are under this category out of a total of 97 pieces.

Like the other Blocks the land ownership and operation reflects the population in Block F. Under the category of owner operated land 7 out of 30 pieces are owned by the Malays while in the case of the rented land 8 pieces of land are rented by the Javanese and 4 by the Malays.

Among the three Blocks, Block D has the highest number of pieces which are owned but not operated. 9 pieces are found in Block F, 10 in Block E and 6 in Block D which has the highest population.

As expected the total number of people is connected with the total number of pieces operated or owned by the people. In Block F, the total number is 51, Block E it is 91 and in Block D 160.

TABLE 17-2 BLOCK E NO. OF PIECES BY SIZE AND OPERATION

| Size of Pieces in Acres | Operated and Owned | | Operated not Owned | | Owned not Operated | | TOTAL |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----|--------------------|----|--------------------|---|-------|
| | M | J | M | J | M | J | |
| Under 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1 & under 2 | 4 | 10 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 4 | 33 |
| 2 & under 3 | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | 6 |
| 3 & under 4 | 15 | 22 | 10 | 3 | - | 2 | 52 |
| 4 & under 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5 & over | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| TOTAL | 20 | 36 | 12 | 13 | 4 | 6 | 91 |

TABLE 12-3 BLOCK F NO. OF PLOTS BY SIZE AND OPERATION

| Size of Plots in Acres | Operated and Owned | | Operated not Owned | | Owned but not Operated | | TOTAL |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|---|-------|
| | M | J | M | J | M | J | |
| Under 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1 & under 2 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 23 |
| 2 & under 3 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 4 |
| 3 & under 4 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 22 |
| 4 & under 5 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| 5 & over | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Total | 7 | 23 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 51 |

From the figures for Blocks D, E and F it can be seen that more than half or 167 out of 303 pieces belong to the 3 and under 4 acres category while next comes land under the category of 1 and under 2 acres. These with 113 pieces. There are 6 pieces of land in the 4 and under 5 acres category and only one is over 5.

CONCLUSION

The Javanese as a result of their greater numbers are the operators and owners of a greater number of pieces of land than the Malays. But the Malays rent more land than the Javanese although, as mentioned above, they have a higher population. Again the first pattern is followed when it comes to the owned but not operated category of land. Here the Javanese have a greater number than the Malays.

In the owned but not operated category of land, some pieces are not worked because of poor soil and lack of water. It must be realised that land which is not worked and over-grown with grass has a cumulative "backwash" effect on the other land. When a land is not worked it becomes a hiding place for rats and other pests which continually harass the crops planted on the neighbouring lands. As a result the harassed farmer is discouraged and so he abandons his farm. When he abandons his farm his farm is now overgrown with grass and small bushes thus becoming a hiding and breeding place for the pests who bother the neighbouring land. This process can go on until the formerly uncultivated land engulfs the surrounding land. Although this process may not occur to such an alarming proportion it is going on in a small way. Maybe it is against the law not to cultivate the land, but some land are still vacant.

Most of the land operated, are under the operated and owned type where 201 pieces of land are owner operated as compared to the total of 303 pieces, and out of these 201 pieces, 121 pieces are in the 3 and under 4 acres group.

It is not surprising, since the area is a padi area, to note that out of the land owned by the inhabitants of the Blocks are padi land, where out of total of 302 pieces, 230 pieces are under padi out of which 162 pieces are owner operated land while 68 pieces are rented land.

In the total figures more than half the number of pieces are in the 3 and under 4 acres category of land while 113 pieces are in the 1 and under 2 acres group. The reason for this preponderance of the two types is because, as mentioned earlier, every settler was provided with a 3 acre sawah lot and 1 acre kampong lot. These figures are therefore to be expected.

As a concluding remark I would like to discuss a subject not exactly relevant to this chapter but which may be of interest to the reader. The application of fertilisers to the soil is an exception rather than the rule, yet the yield is greatest in the Blocks furthest away from the main canal. The explanation for this phenomenon was given by a farmer who said that when the floodgates at the main canals are opened the water would rush to the low lying Blocks and proceed upwards to the Blocks near the main canal. But the water at the low lying Blocks had a very dark brown colour while the water at the Blocks near the main gates were clear and

fit for human consumption. The water was dark brown because of the silt brought down by the water when it rushed down and flooded the field. The silt would settle down when the rush of the water had abated but it settled down mostly at the lowest lying area. The farmers in the Elocks away from the main canal might complain that the dark brown water discoloured the clothes that they wear when working in the field, but it provides the soil with a natural manure and raise the yield of the padi without the farmer knowing it, thereby causing the disparity of the yield of padi between the Elocks near and away from the main canal.

